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National Environmental Indicator Series



Fall 1999

Sustaining Canada's Forests: Timber Harvesting

Environmental indicators are selected key statistics that provide information on significant trends in the environment, natural resource sustainability, and related human activities. The indicators in this bulletin are part of a national set of environmental indicators designed to provide a profile of the state of Canada's environment and measure progress towards sustainable development.

Issue context

Canada's forests cover 417.6 million hectares—almost half of the country's land area and about 10% of the world's total forest land. Some 245 million hectares of this forestland are capable of producing commercially valuable timber (known as "timber-productive forest"). Out of this total, about 119 million hectares are currently accessible and actively managed to produce timber. Each year, about 0.8% of this accessible forest is harvested, removing approximately 174 million cubic metres of wood.

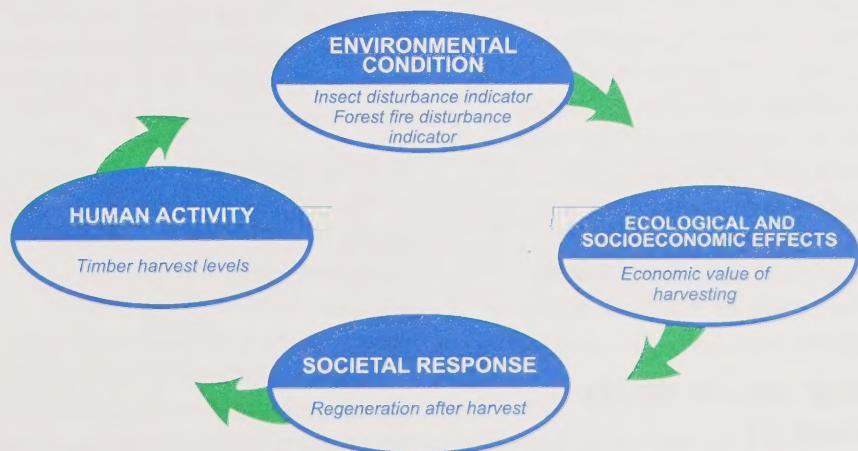
The total area of forested land in Canada that was affected by harvesting, fire, insects, and disease

from 1981 to 1995 was 33 million hectares. This represents an average of 2.2 million hectares affected per year.

Commercial forestry is a major provider of employment and economic benefits for Canadians. In 1997, 366 000 people were directly employed in forestry-related activities. The forest sector contributed close to \$17 billion to the national Gross Domestic Product in 1997, representing 2.5% of our country's total economy.

Canada's forests provide habitat to approximately 140 000 wildlife species, many of which still need to be classified. Forests produce oxygen and remove carbon dioxide—a gas contributing to climate change—from

What are the links?



the atmosphere. Forests also purify water, moderate climate, stabilize soils, and regulate water flow. For ecological as well as economic reasons, therefore, it is important to maintain our forests in a healthy condition.

What are the concerns?

Foresters and environmentalists alike have expressed concerns over the last two decades about the economic, environmental, and sociological implications of changes in the state of Canada's forests. Are forests being managed to ensure a long-term supply of timber? Are timber harvesting and related management practices impairing the forest ecosystem's capacity for renewal? Will Canada's forests continue to provide in perpetuity, the wide range of benefits and values that Canadians desire?

The state of the timber-productive forest is affected not only by harvesting but also by forest management practices to improve timber yields, such as tree planting, fire management, and insect and disease control. Direct effects of some forestry activities include soil compaction and erosion, habitat destruction and isolation, and edge effect (changes in the ecology of the forest due to discontinuity in the forest).

Indirect effects can include altering the natural cycles of insect, disease, and fire disturbances that historically have had an important influence on Canadian forests. A separate environmental indicator bulletin on Forest Biodiversity, published in 1997, addressed some of the ecological effects of forestry activities in Canada's forest ecosystems. These included the effects of road access and changes in tree species composition and age-class distribution, in addition to the population trends of forest birds. Another pressure on the forest ecosystem, acidic deposition, is examined in the Acid Rain indicator bulletin.

What are we doing about it?

Forest policies in Canada have shifted from management for sustained timber yield to management for a

sustainable forest ecosystem. The development and release in 1992 of the National Forest Strategy (NFS) set the principles for this new direction. The NFS was endorsed by federal, provincial, and territorial governments, as well as nongovernmental organizations. Canadians have renewed their commitment to sustainable forests by adopting a new five-year strategy in 1998.

In 1993, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) began an initiative to measure and report regularly on progress in achieving sustainable development. This resulted in the development of 6 criteria and the identification of 83 indicators related to sustainable forest management.

Subsequently, Canada participated in the development of international criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. In 1995, Canada along with 11 other countries, endorsed a common set of criteria and indicators relevant to the world's temperate and boreal forests. This is known as the "Montreal Process".

Through the Model Forest Program, an initiative led by the Canadian Forest Service (CFS), Canada is helping to improve sustainable forest management worldwide. The Model Forest Program provides a unique forum for partners to develop innovative, region-specific approaches to sustainable forest management, including the development of local-level indicators.

As the concept and practice of sustainable forest management in Canada evolve, so too will our ability to track trends in the forest ecosystem and to apply objectives or standards by which to evaluate these trends.

In this bulletin

The indicators in this bulletin are consistent with the indicators of sustainable forest management developed by the CCFM. Timber harvest levels, forest fire disturbance, the economic value of harvesting, and regeneration after harvest indicators are presented nationally. The indicators on insect disturbance are presented by ecozone (refer to the map of Terrestrial Ecozones of Canada in Sustaining

Canada's Forests: Overview, 1995). Two of the four major forested ecozones in Canada were selected for graphical presentation in this indicator; graphs for the other forested ecozones are included in the Technical Supplement.

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This bulletin is accessible on Environment Canada's Green Lane Internet site (www1.ec.gc.ca/~soer).

A TECHNICAL SUPPLEMENT TO THIS BULLETIN IS ALSO AVAILABLE.

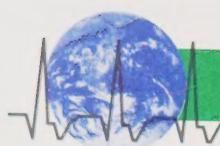
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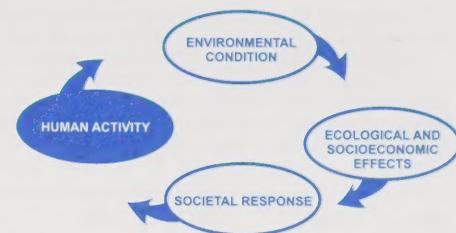




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Sustaining Canada's Forests: Timber Harvesting



Timber harvesting and related forest management activities can have a major impact on forests and are the focus of much public concern. Provincial forest management agencies are responsible for minimizing the environmental impacts of harvesting on public lands; measures for this purpose are evolving in response to changing public values. This indicator characterizes the magnitude of timber harvesting and provides a context within which to consider other indicators selected to cover this issue.

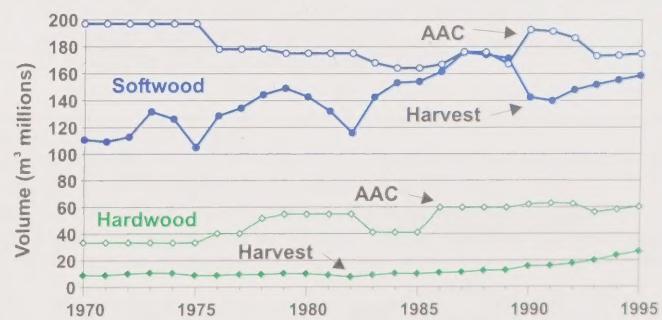
Indicator: Timber harvest levels

- In 1995, about 995 000 ha of forest were harvested, representing 0.4% of Canada's total timber-productive forest area and 0.8% of the accessible timber-productive forest area (inset).
- Harvesting methods include clear-cutting, selection cutting, shelterwood cutting and seed-tree cutting. Clear-cutting, at 87%, is the most widely used method.
- Softwood species (e.g., pine, spruce) accounted for more than 86% of Canada's total commercial timber harvest in 1995. In that year, total harvest levels for softwood were close to (but still below) the allowable annual cut (AAC). In some regions, however, the harvest reached the AAC, and in others, local timber supply shortages were reported.¹
- The hardwood component (e.g., poplar, maple) of the annual harvest increased between 1990 and 1995 by over 6%—representing an annual increase of 1.3 %. This trend is expected to continue in order to meet market demand.

Annual volume and area of timber harvest, 1950–95



Annual softwood and hardwood volume of timber harvest in relation to AAC, 1970–95



Notes:

- Inset—Volume of harvest includes industrial roundwood, fuelwood, and firewood. Harvested area includes Crown and private lands.
- Provincial/territorial governments regulate harvest volumes through the AAC which defines the maximum level of harvest consistent with a sustainable supply of timber. The AAC was adjusted in 1990 to include private lands. Here, the volume of timber harvest includes only industrial roundwood harvested on both Crown and private lands.

Source:

Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service, National Forestry Database, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

¹ Provinces regularly review their AAC and, since 1994, some have reduced them to provide for other land use requirements, such as protected areas, wildlife habitat, and Aboriginal land claims.





Les provinces procèdent tous les ans à une réévaluation de la PAC. Depuis 1994, certaines sont révisées à la baisse pour tenir compte d'autres besoins en matière d'utilisation du territoire: aires protégées, habitats rares et revendications territoriales autochtones.

Ressources naturelles Canada, Service canadien des forêts, Programme national de données sur les forêts, Ottawa (Ontario), Canada.

Source :

publiques et privées.

elle ne concerne que le bois d'industrie recolte sur les terres forestières PAC a été modifiée en 1990 pour inclure les terres privées. Dans ce bulletin, permettant de garantir un approvisionnement durable en bois d'œuvre. La par le bois de foyer. La supérieure provincial régule les terres publiques et privées.

Le bois de résineux inculte le bois d'industrie, le bois de chauffage et

les gouvernements provinciaux et territoriaux régulent le volume de récolte

par le bois de résineux. La récolte annuelle de résineux

est de 1995, les essences résineuses (par ex. le pin et

la part des feuillus (par ex. le peuplier et l'érable

dans la récolte totale, ce qui représente une

augmentation annuelle de 1,3 %. Cette tendance

entre 1990 et 1995, ce qui représente une

dans la récolte totale, soit accrue de plus de 6 %

La part des feuillus (par ex. le peuplier et l'érable

ont signale des pertes locales.

réglions, toutefois, ont atteint ce niveau, et d'autres

possibilité annuelle de coupe (PAC). Certains

de leur récolte était tout juste au-dessous de la

commerciales récoltées au Canada, et le volume total

l'épingle) constituaient plus de 86 % des espèces

En 1995, les essences résineuses (par ex. le pin et

coupe à blanc, utilisée pour 87 % de la récolte.

technique la plus largement répandue est celle de la

progressive, et coupe avec réserve de semencier. Coupe

survivantes: coupe à blanc, coupe de jardinage, coupe

Les techniques employées pour la récolte sont les

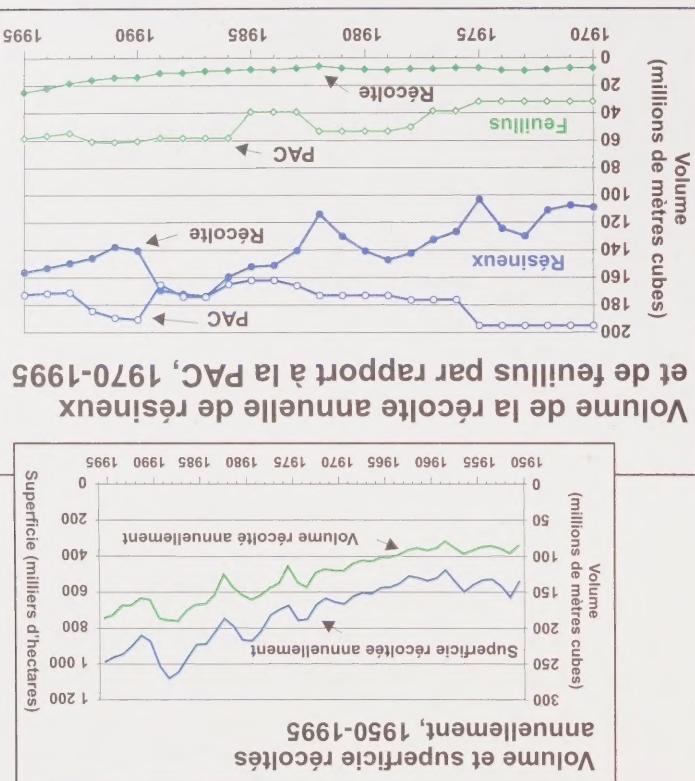
0,8 % de celles qui sont accessibles (v. encadré).

terres forestières productives (pour le bois) et à

récoltes, correspondant à 0,4 % de l'ensembe des

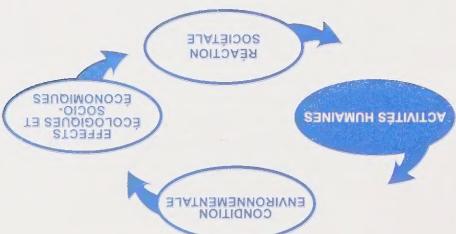
En 1995, environ 995 000 ha de forêt ont été

Indicateur : Les taux de récolte



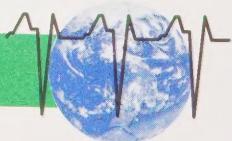
Canada : La récolte de bois

Le maintien des forêts du

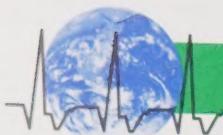


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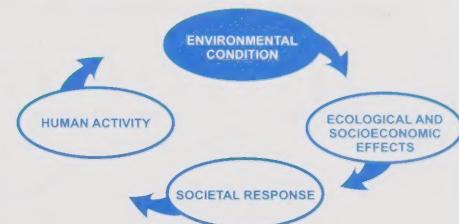


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Sustaining Canada's Forests: Timber Harvesting

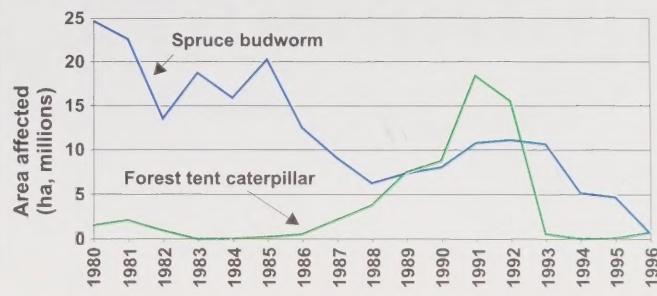


Insects are a natural feature of forests and play an important role in the health, species diversity, and renewal of forest ecosystems. Insect disturbances are usually cyclical and range in size, severity, duration, and frequency. Their measure provides a basis for understanding forest change and tree mortality and hence for achieving sustainable forest management. This indicator shows the importance of several insect disturbances in selected ecozones.

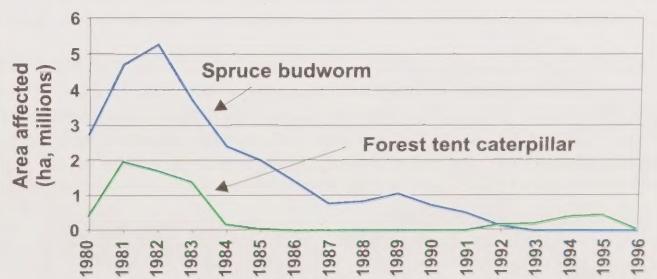
Indicator: Insect disturbance for selected ecozones

- ▶ In 1996, 3% of the total timber-productive forest land in Canada was affected by insect disturbance—a 2% decrease from the previous year.
- ▶ Spruce budworm is the major insect affecting the spruce-fir forests of the Boreal Shield and Atlantic Maritime ecozones. There have been few or no outbreaks in either ecozone since 1993. Forest tent caterpillar infestations have been variable in both ecozones, but disturbances reported currently are minimal.
- ▶ Currently, recurring insect infestations are being controlled using a combination of techniques, such as harvesting damaged stands and applying insecticides (e.g., *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt) to protect high-risk areas.
- ▶ In the Montane Cordillera ecozone, significant outbreaks of mountain pine beetle, an insect that targets lodge-pole pine, peaked in the early 1980s¹. In 1995, the area infested was down to less than 17 000 ha. Chemical controls and salvage logging are routinely used to minimize the spread of the beetle.

Key insect disturbance trends in the Boreal Shield ecozone, 1980–96



Key insect disturbance trends in the Atlantic Maritime ecozone, 1980–96



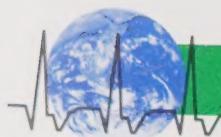
Note:

"Area affected" refers to moderately to severely defoliated forests; trees in these areas have lost 30% or more of their current foliage.

Source:

Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service, Forest Health Network, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

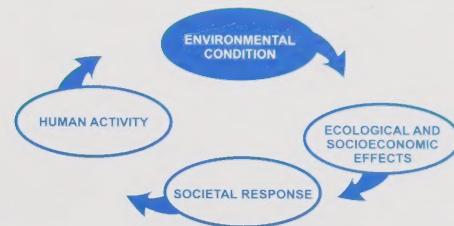
¹ Trees infested by mountain pine beetle usually start to die the year following the attack.



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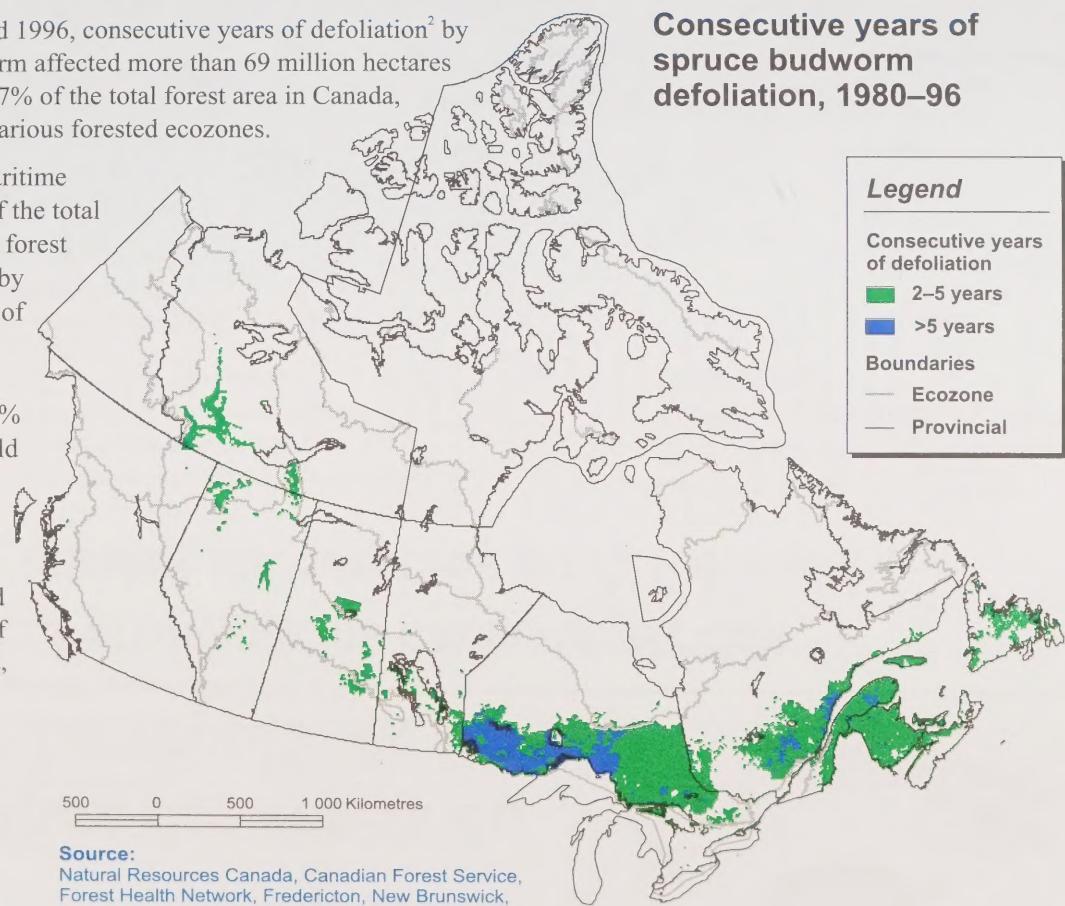
Sustaining Canada's Forests: Timber Harvesting



Indicator: Insect disturbance—Consecutive years of defoliation¹

- Between 1980 and 1996, consecutive years of defoliation² by the spruce budworm affected more than 69 million hectares cumulatively or 17% of the total forest area in Canada, spanning across various forested ecozones.
- In the Atlantic Maritime ecozone, 68.5% of the total timber-productive forest area was affected by consecutive years of defoliation over a 16 year period, compared with 47% in the Boreal Shield ecozone.
- Consecutive years of defoliation result in decreased tree vigour, loss of volume increment, increased wood decay, tree deformities, and, ultimately, tree mortality.

Consecutive years of spruce budworm defoliation, 1980–96



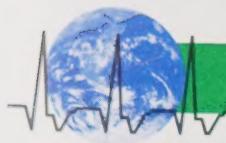
Source:

Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service, Forest Health Network, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

¹ This indicator presents defoliation by spruce budworm only because it is the most widespread insect disturbance in Canada. However, it is recognized that other insects have impacts as well as different patterns of damage.

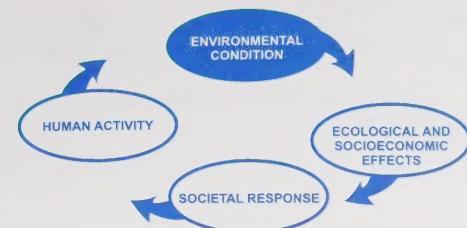
² "Consecutive years of defoliation" refers to two or more consecutive years of moderate to severe defoliation by insects. Tree mortality increases as the severity and duration of attack continues. Tree mortality also differs from stand to stand as well as according to type of insect attack. Forest tent caterpillar defoliates trees over large areas and causes extensive growth losses, but little mortality. Budworm begins to cause growth losses when defoliation reaches about 30%.

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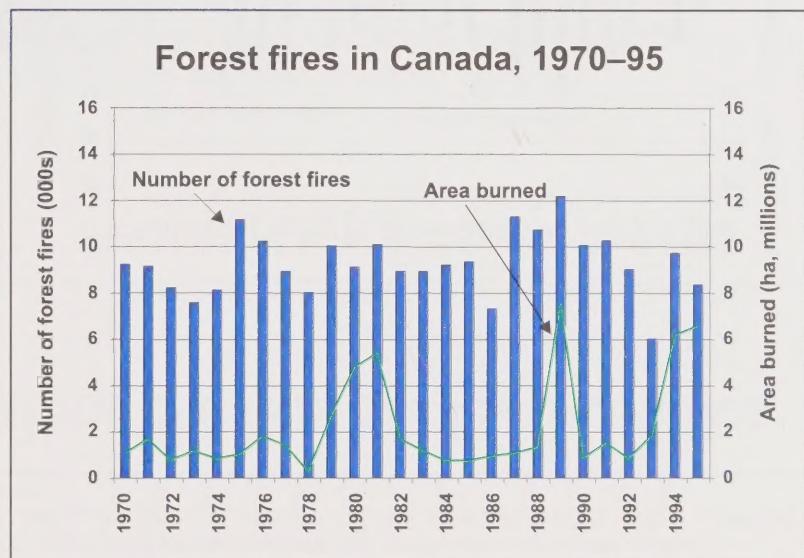
Sustaining Canada's Forests: Timber Harvesting



Forest fires, like insects, are also a natural feature of forest ecosystems and influence natural processes, forest structure and forest function. Many of Canada's forest ecosystems—for example, the boreal forest—owe their origin to fire and depend on fire for their continued existence. Commercial forestry would not be viable in many areas without fire management and forest management practices to control fire. This indicator tracks changes in Canada's total forestland area affected by fire.

Indicator: Forest fire disturbance

- ▶ On average, 9 600 fires burn 2.9 million ha annually in Canada. This represents 0.7% of the total forested land, and this makes fire a disturbance nearly three times as important as harvesting.
- ▶ The area burned by forest fires and the number of forest fires vary greatly from year to year. Weather variability, climate change, forest access, land uses, and management considerations are key factors affecting the numbers and extent of forest fire incidences.
- ▶ During the 1995 fire season, 6.6 million ha of forestland were burned in Canada, primarily because of extremely dry conditions and limited fire suppression in remote areas.
- ▶ Fire is part of the life cycle of many forest ecosystems. For example, the cycle of destruction and renewal of the boreal forest ecosystem by fire allows tree species, such as the jack pine, to reproduce and survive.



Note:

Before 1975, forest fires outside areas designated for fire control measures were neither reported nor suppressed.

Sources:

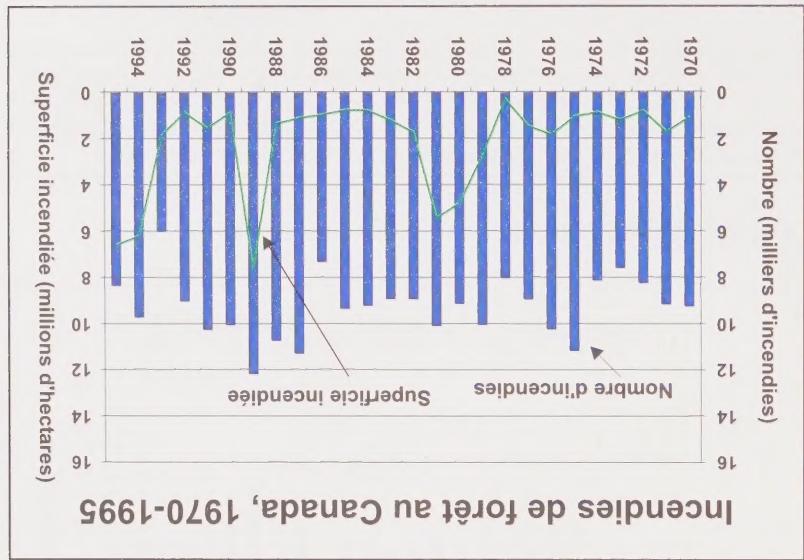
Canadian Council of Forest Ministers. 1997. Compendium of Canadian Forestry Statistics, 1996.

Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service, National Forestry Database Program, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.



Source : Consulat canadien des ministres des forêts, 1997. Abrégé de statistiques forestières canadiennes, 1996.
Ressources naturelles Canada, Service canadien des forêts, Programme national de données sur les forêts, Ottawa (Ontario), Canada.

Remarque : Avant 1995, les incendies de forêt qui faisaient rage en dehors des zones désignées pour la répression n'étaient ni combattus.



Le feu fait partie intégrante du cycle de nombreux écosystèmes forestiers. Par exemple, le cycle de destruction et de régénération de l'écosystème de la forêt boréale résultant des incendies permet de renouveler les écosystèmes forestiers. Par exemple, le cycle de destruction et de régénération de l'écosystème de la forêt boréale résultant des incendies permet de renouveler les écosystèmes forestiers.

Le cycle de destruction et de régénération de l'écosystème de la forêt boréale résultant des incendies permet de renouveler les écosystèmes forestiers.

Au cours de l'année 1995, 6,6 millions d'hectares de terres forestières ont été principalement détruites au Canada en raison d'incendies.

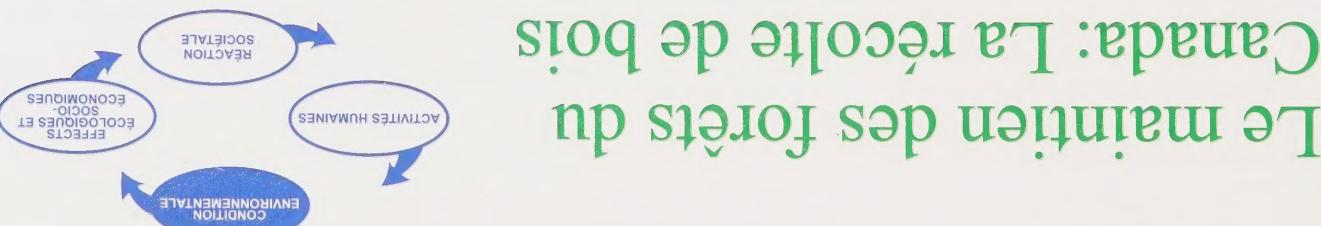
Le nombre et l'étendue des incendies de forêt sont les principaux facteurs influant sur le climatique. L'accès à la forêt, l'utilisation météorologiques, le changement climatique à l'autre. Les variations d'incendies différentes passablement d'une année à l'autre. Les variations

La superficie incendiée et le nombre d'incendies détruisent l'écosystème et le volume de la récolte.

En moyenne, 9 600 incendies détruisent chaque année 2,9 millions d'hectares de forêt au Canada. Cela correspond à 0,7 % de la superficie totale des terres forestières et à presque trois fois le volume de la récolte.

Indicateur : Perturbations causées par les incendies de forêt

Les incendies de forêt constituent, au même titre que les insectes, un élément naturel des écosystèmes forestiers et exercent une influence sur les processus naturels qui déroulent ainsi que sur la structure et la fonction de la forêt. Au Canada, le nombre d'écosystèmes forestiers (par ex. la forêt boréale) doivent leur origine à des incendies et en dépendent pour leur maintien. Si ce n'est pas possible de gérer ces incendies et d'aménager des forêts axées sur la lutte contre les incendies, la forêt commerciale ne servirait pas vraiment de serai pas viable dans bien des endroits. Cet indicateur suit l'évolution de la superficie incendiée par les incendies au Canada.

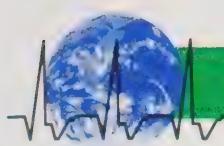


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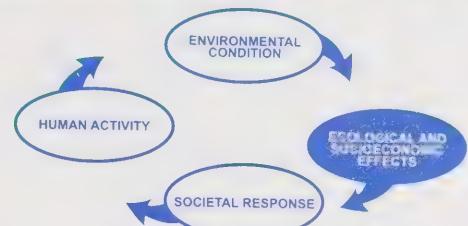


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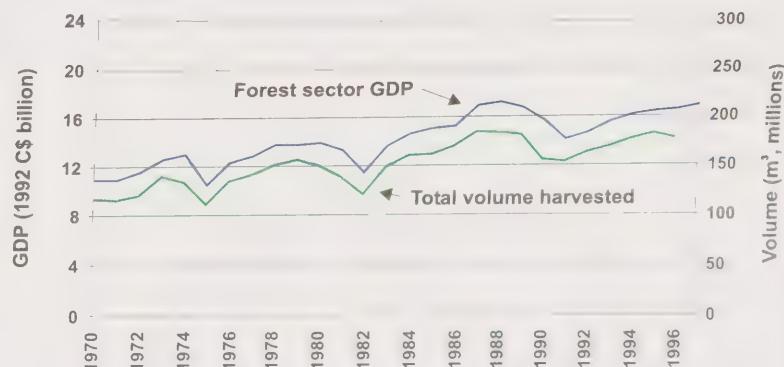


Forest sector Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of the economic wealth generated by forest sector industries (e.g. logging, forest services, wood and paper industries). This indicator tracks the forest sector GDP in relation to the volume of wood harvested in Canada.

Indicator: Economic value of harvesting

- In 1997, Canada's forest sector contributed almost \$17 billion to the national GDP. Of the total contribution, the pulp and paper industry contributed 40%, the wood industry 36%, and logging and forest services 24%.
- The forest sector's GDP closely parallels the volume of wood harvested. This suggests that the value added to the raw wood through manufacturing processes has remained fairly constant and indicates that the forest sector has not diversified significantly into products with higher added value.

Forest sector Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in relation to harvest volume, 1970–97



Note:

- i) Volume of harvest includes industrial roundwood only; fuelwood and firewood are not included.
- Volume data include timber harvested on both Crown and private land.

Source:

Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

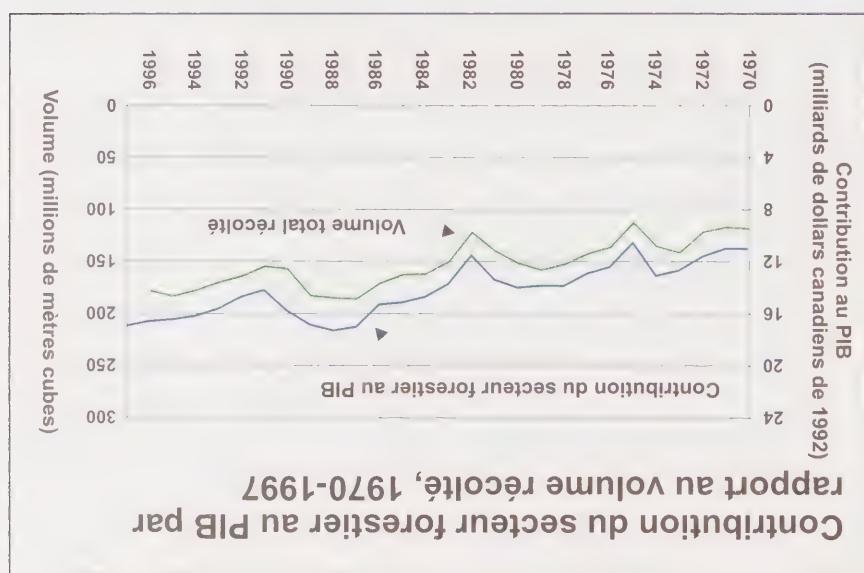
ressources naturelles Canada, Service canadien des forêts, Ottawa (Ontario), Canada.

Le volume de la recette inclut le bois d'industrie et exclut le bois de chauffage et le foyer. Il n'est pas nécessaire de faire la distinction entre les terres publiques et privées.

manitestement eu peu de diversification sur le plan des produits à valeur ajoutée.

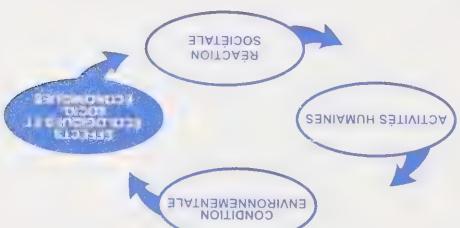
La portion du PIB contribuée par le secteur des forêts correspond étrittement au volume de bois record. Ceci porte à croire que la valeur ajoutée au bois brut par le biais des procédés de fabrication est démeure relativement constante et qu'il y a

En 1997, la contribution du secteur forestier canadien au PIB a atteint près de 17 milliards de dollars. De ce montant, 40 % proviennent de l'industrie des pâtes et papiers, 36 % de l'industrie du bois et 24 % de l'exploitation et des services forestiers.



Indicateur : La valeur économique de la récolte

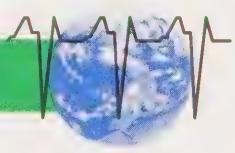
La contribution du secteur forestier au produit intérieur brut (PIB) constitue une mesure de la richesse générée par l'industrie forestière au cours d'une année (par ex. l'exploitation, les services forestiers et les industries du bois et du papier). Cet indicateur suit l'évolution du rapport entre la portion du PIB contribuée par le secteur forestier et le volume de bois recolte au pays.



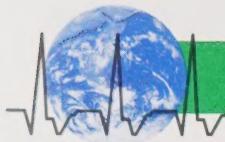
Le maintien des forêts du Canada: La récolte de bois

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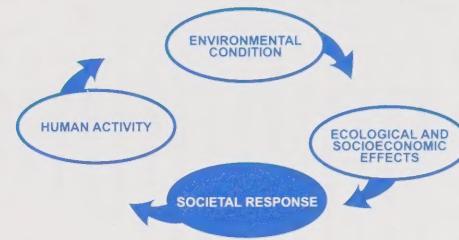


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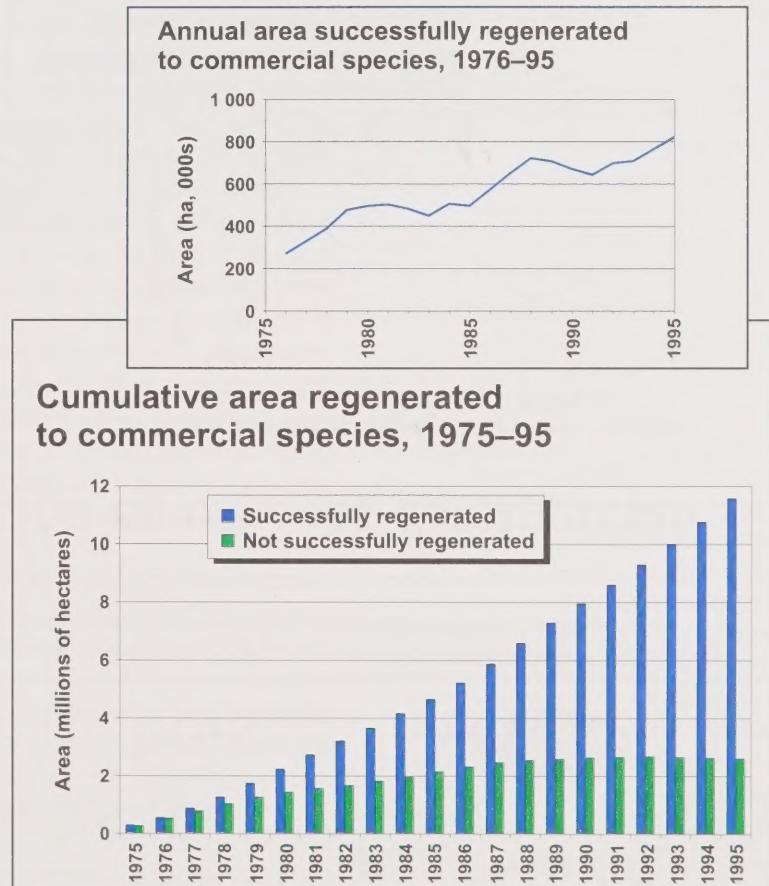
Sustaining Canada's Forests: Timber Harvesting



This indicator tracks the relative success of replacing commercial timber on Crown land after harvesting. Delays in regenerating harvested areas to commercial species can reduce the long-term timber supply.

Indicator: Regeneration to commercial species after harvest

- ▶ Since 1991, the annual area successfully regenerated to commercial species has increased by more than 23% (see inset). Reasons for the steady increase in the regenerating land base include modified harvest methods and intensive planting efforts in the 1980s, which concentrated on reforesting the backlog of areas that had not regenerated.
- ▶ The cumulative land base of Crown forest regenerated to commercial species since 1975 is close to 12 million hectares.
- ▶ The cumulative area not successfully regenerated peaked in 1991 at 2.7 million hectares. By 1995, it had dropped to slightly under 2.6 million hectares. The time lag between harvesting and the results of subsequent treatments, such as planting or natural stand development, must be taken into consideration when evaluating the success of efforts to generate commercial species.
- ▶ With new and improved site management practices after harvesting, foresters now plan for up to two-thirds of harvested areas to regenerate naturally.



Notes:

- i) Data on regeneration are available for Crown land only.
- ii) Excludes roads and landings.

Source:

Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service, National Forestry Database Program, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.





ressources naturelles Canada, Service canadien des forêts, Programme national des données sur les forêts, Ottawa (Ontario), Canada.

Source :
 iii) Les chemins et dépôts transitoires sont exclus.
 ii) Les données sur la régénération ne sont disponibles que pour les terres publiques.

Remarques :

Les deux tiers des superficies recoltées peuvent être planifiées pour le réaménagement des forêts. Les deux tiers des superficies recoltées peuvent être planifiées pour le réaménagement des forêts.

Grâce à l'amélioration des techniques d'aménagement après la récolte, les deux tiers des superficies recoltées peuvent être planifiées pour le réaménagement des forêts.

Le temps pour produire des résultats aux traitements sylvicoles effectués après la récolte (plantation ou régénération naturelle) aux essences commerciales, il faut laisser des mesures entreprises pour le renouvellement des hectares en 1995. Avant d'évaluer les mesures entreprises ou la régénération à 12 millions d'hectares en 1991, puis à 2,7 millions d'hectares en 1995, il faut être imadéquate à atteindre un maximum de 12 millions d'hectares.

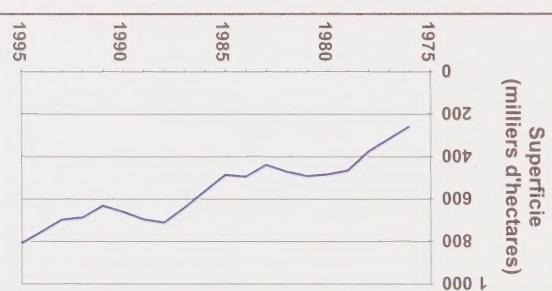
La superficie des terres où la régénération a ensuité diminue sous les 2,6 millions d'hectares en 1991, puis a été imadéquate à atteindre un maximum de 12 millions d'hectares.

Depuis 1975, la superficie totale des terres publiques où il y a eu régénération en espèces commerciales approche les 12 millions d'hectares.

Depuis 1975, la superficie essentiellement anciennes parterres de coupe non régénérées. Les années 1980, qui visitent essentiellement l'effort intensif de réboisement mené dans les années 1970, ont été progressivement notées la modélisation des techniques de récolte et contribue à cette progression notable (voir encadré). Parmi les facteurs qui ont contribué avec succès en essences commerciales, il y a une augmentation de 23 % depuis 1991, la superficie annuelle totale régénérée avec succès en essences.

Depuis 1991, la superficie annuelle totale régénérée avec succès en essences

Superficie cumulative régénérée en essences commerciales, 1975-1995



Superficie annuelle régénérée avec succès en essences commerciales, 1976-1995

Depuis 1991, la superficie annuelle totale régénérée avec succès en essences

Indicateur : Régénération en espèces commerciales

Cet indicateur donne une mesure du succès atteint dans le remplacement des arbres des essences commerciales recoltées sur les terres publiques. Tout retard dans la régénération des espèces commerciales risque d'entraîner une baisse des approvisionnements à long terme.

Canada : La récolte de bois

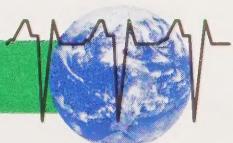
Le maintien des forêts du

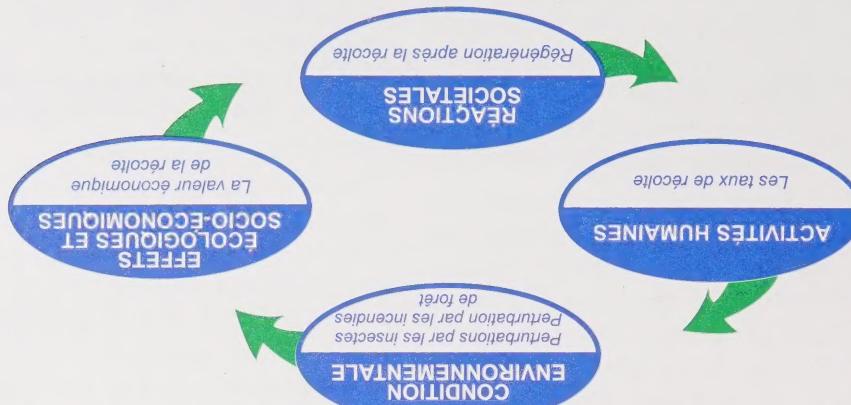
après la récolte



Série nationale d'indicateurs environnementaux

Automne 1999





Quels sont les items ?

Leexploitation forestière constitue une importante source d'emplois et d'avantages économiques pour les Canadiens. En 1997, 366 000 personnes occupaient des emplois dans des activités liées à la forêt. Au cours de la même année, l'appport du secteur forestier au produit intérieur brut a atteint près de 17 milliards de dollars, soit 2,5 % de l'ensemble de notre économie.

Les forêts canadiennes fournissent un habitat à quelque 140 000 espèces d'oiseaux, dont bon nombre sont sauvages, et produisent de l'oxygène et l'absorbent du dioxyde de carbone de l'atmosphère — un gaz contribuant au changement climatique. De plus, elles contribuent à l'eau, tempérant le climat, stabilisent les sols et régularisent le débit de l'eau.

Amis!, que ce soit pour des raisons économiques ou économiques, il est important de faire preuve de respect et de compréhension l'un envers l'autre.

Les forêts canadiennes couvrent environ 417,6 millions d'hectares (Mha), soit presque la moitié de la superficie du Canada et environ 10 % du territoire canadien. Environ 245 Mha peuvent soutenir la production d'essences commerciales. Ce sont les terres forestières productives", dont 119 Mha seulement sont présentement accessibles et soumis à un régime d'aménagement pour la production de bois d'énergie. Chaque année, on recueille environ 0,8 % de la superficie forestière et environ 174 millions de mètres cubes de bois.

Environ 1981 et 1995, 33 Mha de forêt ont été détruites par la maladie, les incendies, les insectes ou les école de 2,2 Mha.

Contexte

Le maintien des forêts du Canada : La récolte de bois

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Environment Canada

A stylized illustration of Earth, showing blue oceans and white clouds, overlaid with a black line graph. The graph features several sharp, vertical peaks and troughs, suggesting a signal or data fluctuation. A solid green horizontal bar is positioned at the top of the image, partially covering the Earth.